

WE CLAIM:

1. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, the data structure comprising:

a first data field identifying a network address provided by a server computer for retrieving a data file identifying one or more diagnostics modules;

a second data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for requesting authorization to download the one or more diagnostics modules; and

a third data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for retrieving the one or more diagnostics modules.

2. The computer-readable medium of Claim 1, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a fourth data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for requesting authorization to begin execution of a one of the one or more diagnostics modules.

3. The computer-readable medium of Claim 2, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a fifth data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for notifying the server computer that the execution of a one of the one or more diagnostics modules has completed.

4. The computer-readable medium of Claim 3, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a sixth data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for notifying the server computer that an error has occurred with respect to the execution of a one of the one or more diagnostics modules.

5. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, the data structure comprising:

a first data field identifying one or more devices upon which a diagnostic on-demand may be performed;

a second data field identifying for each of the devices one or more compressed files that must be retrieved and installed prior to performing the diagnostic on-demand; and

a third data field containing data describing for each of the compressed files identifying one or more files contained within each of the compressed files identified in the second data field.

6. The computer-readable medium of Claim 5, wherein the data structure further comprises:

a fourth data field containing an entry for each of the files contained within a compressed file, each entry in the fourth field providing installation information or version information for the identified file.

7. The computer-readable medium of Claim 6, wherein the first data field further comprises data identifying one or more compressed files that must be retrieved and installed prior to performing any diagnostic on-demand.

8. The computer-readable medium of Claim 7, wherein the first data field further comprises data identifying one or more languages supported by the diagnostics modules.

9. The computer-readable medium of Claim 8, wherein the second data field further comprises data for each of the compressed files identifying one or more entries to be added to a registry of a computer system during installation of the compressed files.

10. The computer-readable medium of Claim 9, wherein the third data field further comprises information describing a condition that must be satisfied prior to installing the files identified in the third data field.

11. The computer-readable medium of Claim 10, wherein the installation information provided in the fourth field comprises data indicating whether a particular file should be called for registering itself after it is copied onto a computer system.

12. A method for providing a diagnostic on-demand, the method comprising:

receiving at a client computer, a request to perform a diagnostic on a single component of the client computer;

in response to the request, retrieving from a server computer a first data file comprising a first data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for retrieving a second data file identifying one or more diagnostics modules, a second data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for requesting authorization to download the one or more diagnostics modules, and a third data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for retrieving the one or more diagnostics modules;

obtaining the second data file from the server computer at the network address identified by the first data field, the second data file comprising a first data field identifying one or more devices upon which a diagnostic on-demand may be performed, a second data field identifying for each of the devices one or more compressed files that must be retrieved and installed prior to performing the diagnostic on-demand, a third data field containing data describing for each of the compressed files identifying one or more files contained within each of the compressed files identified in the second data field, a fourth data field containing an entry for each of the files contained within a compressed file, each entry in the fourth field providing installation information or version information for the identified file;

retrieving from the third data field of the first data file the one or more data files identified by second data field of the second data file for the device upon which the diagnostic is to be performed;

installing the retrieved data files according to the data contained in the fourth data field of the second data file; and

executing the retrieved data files to perform the requested diagnostic on-demand.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the first data file further comprises a fourth data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for requesting authorization to begin execution of a one of the one or more diagnostics modules and wherein a request is made to the network address identified in the fourth data field of the first data file for authorization prior to executing the retrieved data files.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the first data file further comprise a fifth data field identifying a network address provided by the server computer for notifying the server computer that the execution of a one of the one or more diagnostics modules has completed and wherein the method further comprises calling the network address provided in the fifth data field of the first data file following the completion of the execution of the retrieved data files.

15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the second data file further comprises a fourth data field containing an entry for each of the files contained within a compressed file, each entry in the fourth field providing installation information or version information for the identified file and wherein the method further comprises installing the retrieved files according to the information contained within the fourth data field of the second data file.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the first data field of the second data file further comprises data identifying one or more compressed files that must be retrieved and installed prior to performing any diagnostic on-demand and wherein the

method further comprises retrieving and installing the compressed files identified in the first data field of the second data file.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the wherein the second data field of the second data file further comprises data for each of the compressed files identifying one or more entries to be added to a registry of a computer system during installation of the compressed files and wherein the method further comprises adding entries to the registry for the retrieved data files according to the data stored in the second data field of the second data file.

18. The method of Claim 17, wherein the third data field of the second data file further comprises information describing a condition that must be satisfied prior to installing the files identified in the third data field of the second data file and wherein installing the retrieved files comprises installing the retrieved files only if the condition is satisfied.

19. A computer-readable medium storing computer-executable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of Claim 12.

20. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 12.